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EDITORIAL NOTES.

Hebrew in the Seminary Elective.—The question whether Hebrew shall be made elective in our theological seminaries has already been answered affirmatively in some institutions and is under consideration in others.

It is urged that the amount of time necessary to acquire a working knowledge of Hebrew can, in the case of many students, be spent more profitably in other lines of study. The labor required is great, the results are comparatively meager, and, at best, the knowledge gained is only linguistic. A good course in the English Old Testament, studied both historically and exegetically, would be, it is claimed, of far more practical benefit, and would still leave time for much work in other directions. Why shall the man who has no special aptness in learning language be compelled to spend so much time with so little, comparatively, of practical result, only to forget that little soon after he enters the pastoral life?

The real question, however, is not, Shall every student take Hebrew? but, Shall that be considered and credited as a thorough theological course which does not include Hebrew? The degree of Bachelor of Divinity, if it is to mean any thing, should mean that the person who receives it has, at least, a fair knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity, of the development of Christianity in the world, and the ability to interpret the Word which is the source of its doctrines and the germ of its development. If now he may be ignorant of Hebrew and still be deemed a well equipped interpreter of the Bible, why may he not be ignorant of Greek? If the English Bible is sufficient in the one case, is it not sufficient in the other? No doubt there are many men who, on account of deficient education, age or other circumstances, cannot profitably spend time on the languages. For them, it is better to put their efforts upon other work. But the seminary must not regulate its standard to suit this class. Let those who cannot profitably spend time on Hebrew, study something else; but let the standard be kept up, and let it be understood that a full course and a degree in divinity include an adequate knowledge of the Old Testament original. To confer a degree without that, is to say that a partial equipment is as good as a complete one.

If it should be urged that, as Hebrew is taught in the seminaries, the amount of Hebrew which can be gained by the average student is so slight that it does not pay, that would be a most humiliating confession to make. If this is at all true, the remedy lies not in abandoning the little, but in rejuvenating the department of Hebrew.

On the eve, or rather in the beginning, of a renascence of interest in the Old Testament, and at a time when it is the biblical battle-ground, seminaries will be recreant to their trust if they set before students for the ministry a standard of superficial training. The work of a divinity school is not to train specialists, but it is to furnish men for the ministry who are adequately fitted to interpret the Bible to the people. They must be at home not simply in one part of the Scriptures, but in all parts.

It might be suggested that this question would not come up for consideration if Hebrew were recognized as it should be in our colleges, so that men might enter the seminary prepared to study the Old Testament as they do the New. But the responsibility rests for the present upon the seminaries, and until the better time when the Semitic languages find a place in the curricula of all good colleges, they must continue to carry the responsibility; and the higher they keep their standard, the more urgently they demand a knowledge of Hebrew, the sooner will the need be supplied.

Shall the Revision be Revised?—This question has been asked in all soberness; but is it really worthy of consideration? Would any thing be gained by a second revision? Would a second revision be more likely either to satisfy the popular mind, or to command the respect of scholars?

The most difficult item in the whole problem of Bible-Revision is the fact that the desire, and we may perhaps add, the whims, of two entirely distinct and widely separated classes of people must be satisfied. It will never be possible for any man, or set of men, to produce a revision of the Holy Scriptures which will be entirely acceptable even to a majority of either of these classes. For scholars, nothing short of a new translation will be at all satisfactory; for the average Bible-reader, even the changes which a revision introduces are distasteful. The revision of the Revision means still further changes. When these are made, the scholar will still remain unsatisfied; while, on the other hand, every additional change will make the general adoption of the Revision more difficult.

We believe that further revision will be fruitless. Let the time and money which would thus be spent be given to work on the Old Testament *text;* and when the necessary work has been done in this line, let us have a new translation. For the present, and for the next half century, the recent Revision, notwithstanding its defects and shortcomings, must suffice.

The Revision, Considered Theologically.—Two charges have been made against the theological character of the new Revision. It is claimed, on the one hand, that many additional changes would have been made, but for the theological prejudices of the majority of the revisers; and on the other hand, that the rationalistic tendency of a large minority of the revisers is clearly seen in the character of the marginal readings which have been introduced in such number.

The most interesting of all the texts in the Old Testament are those which are commonly believed to refer directly or indirectly to the Messiah. Now in the case of many of these texts there has been handed down a traditional interpretation with which the Messianic teaching of the Old Testament, as it lies in the minds of many scholars, is indissolubly connected. Of these passages, Gen. XLIX., 10 *Until Shiloh come*, Isa. VII., 14 *A virgin shall conceive and bear a son*, Ps. XXII., 16 *They pierced my hands and my feet*, may be taken as specimens. The old interpretation seems to be given up, if the marginal translation is adopted, *Till he come to Shiloh*, *A maiden is with child and beareth*, *They bound*, or *like a lion*, *my hands and my feet.*

Those, therefore, who maintained the rendering as given in the text are charged with being influenced by traditional prejudices; while those who stood for the marginal rendering are termed rationalistic.